

### SR-12 Project Introduction

The Utah Department of Transportation (UDOT) and the Federal Highway Administration are beginning an environmental assessment for SR-12, between Escalante and Boulder, to identify and propose road improvements. SR-12 is the only principal through highway linking US-89 with SR-24. It is also one of the most stunning and scenic



byways in America. SR-12 is the gateway to such sites as Bryce Canyon and Capitol Reef National Parks; the Glen Canyon Recreation Area; Kodachrome, Escalante, and Anasazi State Parks; the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument; and the Dixie National Forest.

The entire SR-12 corridor has been the subject of several previous studies conducted by UDOT and the Five County Association of Governments. Previous studies have determined that due to bicycle and pedestrian traffic, narrow or lack of shoulders, and the need for passing areas / pull outs, improvements to SR-12 need to be evaluated, but that any improvements should preserve the corridor's

character. This environmental assessment will focus on the specific needs and challenges of a 28-mile section of SR-12 between milepost 60 and milepost 88. This environmental assessment will be prepared over the next three years.

#### Project Goals:

- Balance the needs of the different modes of transportation on SR-12
- Provide for safety needs while preserving human and natural resources
- Define solutions that are consistent with the natural environment

### Project Overview and Schedule

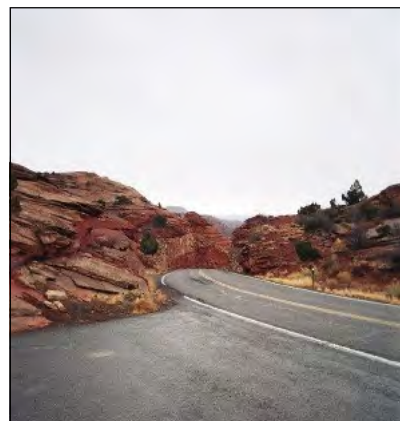
The environmental assessment will take into consideration prior studies, existing and future conditions, stakeholder and agency input, and the environmental context to determine the environmental impacts of proposed alternatives. The steps involved in an environmental assessment are: 1) Develop a Purpose and Need statement to establish the project intent, 2) Develop possible alternatives, including a no-build alternative which would preserve the corridor's character, and 3) Analyze the impacts of each alternative, identifying possible mitigation options. The environmental assessment has been divided into two phases to provide flexibility in the decision-making process.

#### Phase I

During this phase, data for the project area will be collected from existing documents, plans, studies, databases, resource agencies, and the public. Once collected, the information will be consolidated and used to develop a Purpose and Need statement that determines the most important and critical areas and features within the project parameters. This phase is estimated to be completed in the summer of 2005.

#### Phase II

This phase includes a detailed alternative analysis (alternatives include proposed safety options/improvements for SR-12), alternative evaluations, including those found in previous studies, and alternative selection. Impacts for each alternative will then be studied and documented in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). Phase II is estimated to be completed in 2007.



### Contact Us

For more information, please visit our web site at [www.udot.utah.gov/sr-12](http://www.udot.utah.gov/sr-12) or contact the SR-12 Team at:

310 East 4500 South, Suite 600  
Salt Lake City, Utah 84107  
Phone: (801) 262-8700  
Fax: (801) 262-8885  
Email: [sr-12@hwlochner.com](mailto:sr-12@hwlochner.com)

# SR-12 Environmental Assessment

## Project Update

### Spring 2005

Over the past eight months, the SR-12 project team has received numerous comments regarding the SR-12 corridor and surrounding area. Through comment forms, letters, phone calls, and emails, the general public has given the project team a wonderful opportunity to view the project area from their perspective.



The previous comment form asked three key questions to help the project team understand your experience on the SR-12 corridor, the concerns you have regarding SR-12, and ideas you have for possible solutions to those concerns. The team also asked what the most important resources are along SR-12. The following is a brief and general summary of your comments:

#### **How would you describe your experience traveling on SR-12?**

Exciting, beautiful, scenic, unique, pleasant, relaxing, magnificent, awe-inspiring, colorful, dangerous, wonderful, unsafe, great, remote, spectacular, scary, treacherous, quiet, wild, slow, crooked, narrow, enjoyable

#### **What concerns, if any, do you have regarding SR-12?**

Visual impacts, congestion, need for barriers, barriers are unattractive, safety, need for turnouts, improvements that change the look and feel, speed limits are too fast, bicycle safety, need for reflector lights, need for signage, need for less signage, too much trash, noise, maintenance

#### **What are your ideas for possible solutions on SR-12?**

Widen the shoulders and/or roadway, fix existing pavement, add safety barriers where needed, straighten roadway curves, simplify signage, add more signage to inform tourists, eliminate all bicycle traffic, add passing lanes, add a bike path/lane, add turnoffs/pullouts, reduce posted speed limits, do not change anything

#### **The following is a tabulation of what resources are most important to you:**

Visual Resources:	42
Fish and Wildlife:	37
Water Quality:	31
Vegetation:	30
Cultural Resources:	29
Threatened and Endangered Species:	22
Wetlands:	20
Other:	24

(Remove junkyard, preserve sight, smell, and sound of area, safety, cows, nighttime light pollution, wilderness, noise, access to hiking and camping areas, air quality, timber, grazing)



**SR-12, Escalante to Boulder in Garfield County, Utah  
Notice of Public Hearing for Environmental Assessment**

**YOU ARE INVITED TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE PROJECT AND TO TELL US WHAT YOU THINK!**

**August 6, 2009  
Boulder City Hall: 351 North 100 East  
5:30 – 7:30 P.M.**

In December 2008, UDOT released a draft environmental assessment (EA) for public review. This EA evaluated improvements to SR-12 from Escalante to Boulder; see study area map on page 3. **The purpose of the project is to:**

- Provide adequate space for UDOT to perform ongoing maintenance operations on the roadway and supporting infrastructure
- Improve safety and infrastructure where the roadway facilities are deficient or deteriorating
- Accommodate the wide range of corridor users (e.g., automobiles, bicyclists, and tourists)

**Proposed improvements are (see examples on page 3):**

- Construct six slow-vehicle turnouts
- Improve the Hole-in-the-Rock Road and Calf Creek Recreation Area intersections by adding turn lanes
- Widen the roadway at one narrow curve (MP 71)
- Improve signage (e.g., bicyclists and wildlife) to reduce conflicts
- Obtain right-of-way for 14.2 miles from MP 68.9 to MP 83.1
- Replace the Calf Creek Bridge
- Stabilize the roadway at three locations where the barrier or embankment is unstable (which may require blasting)

From Escalante to Boulder, SR-12 is 26.5 miles long with 14.2 miles where the current roadway right-of-way is vaguely defined by RS-2477 as “edge of disturbance.” Wilderness study areas are adjacent to the road for roughly one-third of this section. The boundaries of the wilderness study areas are also defined by “edge of disturbance.”

Spot improvements are not proposed in the wilderness study areas. (One slow-vehicle turn out is proposed between the road and a powerline where BLM acknowledges a wilderness study area mapping error.) However, UDOT is requesting right-of-way (generally 100 feet from centerline) that overlaps with land currently designated as a wilderness study area.

**Below are a sample of comments received thus far and the associated responses from the project team.**

**1. Comment**

Improvements will result in increased speed and decreased safety. (8 comments)

**Response**

*The proposed action does not promote increased speed; it does not include changes to the speed limit or the straightening of any curves.*

For more information or questions, contact Andrea Clayton or Loretta Markham, HW Lochner, at 801-262-8700, [Sr-12@hwlochner.com](mailto:Sr-12@hwlochner.com). To review the Environmental Assessment, go to [www.udot.utah.gov/sr-12/](http://www.udot.utah.gov/sr-12/).



## **2. Comment**

Blasting is not necessary. The road is already safe, and improvements can be done without blasting. (13 comments)

### Response

*UDOT is responsible for maintaining infrastructure and the safety of the traveling public. UDOT has identified areas where the improvements simply cannot be made without the use of blasting. Blasting is deemed necessary in an effort to avoid Calf Creek, wilderness study areas, and identified cultural resources.*

## **3. Comment**

It is not legal for BLM to transfer wilderness study areas within the SR-12 right-of-way.

### Response

*UDOT will request a 200-foot right-of-way along the corridor. Upon adoption of the FHWA EA, BLM will be provided the opportunity to determine whether to accept the request for the land transfer per citation.*

## **4. Comment**

The right-of-way UDOT is requesting (200 feet total width) is excessive and will serve as a “blank check” for UDOT to conduct future activities without environmental clearance. (13 comments)

### Response

*Additional right-of-way is necessary to construct the spot improvements and perform routine maintenance. It is more efficient to obtain right-of-way for the entire corridor rather than for scattered pieces. Future activities within the right-of-way would still be subject to environmental clearance.*

## **5. Comment**

Right-of-way should follow Title V process (BLM process) rather than Title 23 process (FHWA process). (17 comments)

### Response

*Either process would produce essentially the same result: title ownership would remain with the United State governments, and UDOT would have an easement for operation and maintenance of the highway. Title 23 is the standard process used by FHWA for highway rights-of-way across public lands. Under Title 23, jurisdiction for highway purposes would be transferred to FHWA, who would then transfer an easement to UDOT.*

## **6. Comment**

Support Community Conservation Alternative. (10 comments)

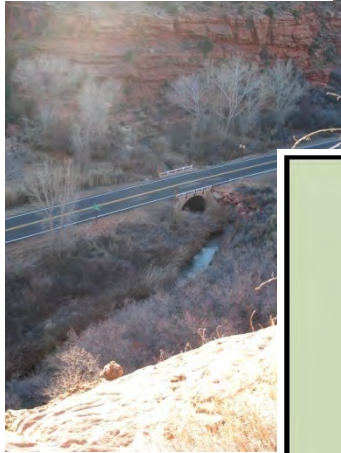
### Response

*The Community Conservation Alternative was suggested by the Wild Utah Project through comments in February of 2009. Some elements of this proposal were evaluated during development of the proposed alternative. Aspects of the Community Conservation Alternative not previously considered will be evaluated during the response to comment process.*

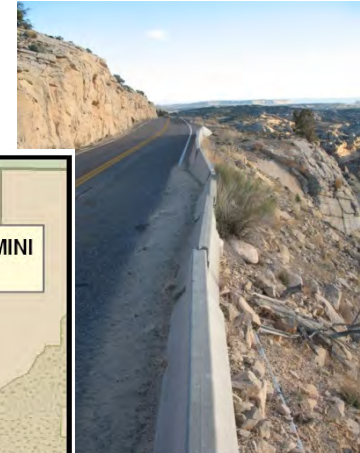


## Calf Creek Recreation Area Intersection

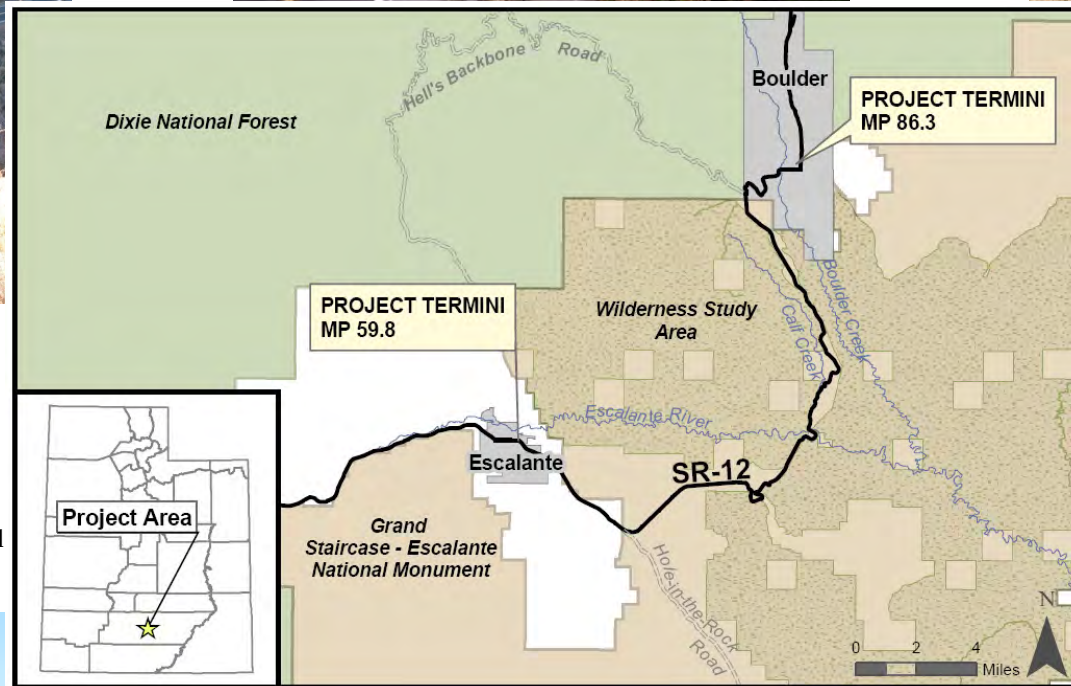
Calf Creek Bridge



Inadequately Supported Barrier



Hole-In-The Rock Road Intersection



Unstable Embankment



**SR-12**  
**ESCALANTE**  
**TO BOULDER**

For more information or questions, contact Andrea Clayton or Loretta Markham, HW Lochner, at 801-262-8700, [Sr-12@hwlochner.com](mailto:Sr-12@hwlochner.com). To review the Environmental Assessment, go to [www.udot.utah.gov/sr-12/](http://www.udot.utah.gov/sr-12/).